

Unified Command News Release  
PACIFIC PIPELINES/PYRAMID LAKE OIL SPILL  
DATE: March 26, 2005 TIME: 4:30 P.M.

#### Clean-up continues on Pyramid Lake

Clean-up of the crude oil spill from a pipeline break above Pyramid Lake is progressing, according to the Unified Command – the California Dept. of Fish and Game Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Pacific Energy Partners – who are directing response activities.

The oil contamination is limited to the natural drainage area from the landslide site where the pipeline broke, down Posey Canyon to Pyramid Lake, where it is contained in a cove by several rows of boom.

When the oil and water are separated at another site, the amount of oil recovered can be more accurately quantified. As of this afternoon, over 14,300 gallons of crude oil have been removed from the site. Approximately ten cubic yards of oily debris (mostly twigs, sticks, and other vegetation) has been removed from the lake and shore.

Soil instability east of I-5 has prevented much clean-up activity in that area, to date. Geologists analyze conditions daily, and it is hoped that additional rain forecast will not lead to another slide. Safety officers are monitoring the air in work areas around the spill, in order to protect employees and contractors doing the clean-up work.

Today's operations include six skimmers removing oil from the cove. Crews are also removing oil from the capture pools created by underflow dams in the canyon leading to the cove. An underflow dam is one in which drain pipes are installed at the bottom of the dam, allowing clean water to flow into the lake, while keeping the oil in the pool behind the dam.

Decontamination of equipment, protective clothing and work supplies is an important part of any oil spill clean-up. This operation's decontamination station includes six debris bins at the Smokey Bear Road boat ramp. The boat ramp is also the primary staging area and lake access point for on-water operations.

"The Dept. of Fish and Game is doing biological assessment," said Lt. Nathaniel Arnold, the State Incident Commander. "We haven't seen any affected wildlife, yet, but we're looking for animals, and investigating ecosystem damage."

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MEDIA NOTE: US Forest Service Public Affairs Officer Robert Brady will continue to be available at the Vista Del Lago Visitor Center command post, for daily briefings at 12:30 P.M. Dept. of Fish and Game OSPR Information Officer Dana Michaels is returning to Sacramento, where she can provide updated information by phone at (916) 327-9948, beginning the afternoon of Monday, March 28.

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